



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAM TO BE HELD AT NEW STATE VETERANS CEMETERY

SDDVA is in the process of fashioning the first Memorial Day program and the ribbon cutting ceremony at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery. The program is scheduled for Monday, May 31, at 2:00 pm. (CT).

Unlike the groundbreaking ceremony, parking will be limited at the cemetery due to landscaping. SDDVA is working with one of our great partners, River Cities Public Transit, to provide transportation to and from the ceremony. We will continue to update you on the program and transportation as the date draws near.

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SDNG TO SUPPORT IHS/OST WITH COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

The South Dakota National Guard will provide support to Indian Health Services and the Oglala Sioux Tribe during two COVID-19 vaccination events on the Pine Ridge Reservation in April and May.

IHS, in partnership with the OST requested the support of the SDNG for several vaccination events in Kyle and Pine Ridge. Gov. Kristi Noem approved the request for SDNG support.

The SDNG will provide medical personnel to assist in administering the vaccine and provide administrative support.

Vaccines will be available for residents of the Pine Ridge Reservation and/or a patient of the Pine Ridge Service Unit – IHS, aged 16 years and older. The event will also include a health fair and offer information and small health program items for community members.

Locations, dates, and times are as follows:

April 16—Little Wound High School Gymnasium—Kyle—10 am to 6 pm (MT).

April 17—Pine Ridge Elementary School Gymnasium—Pine Ridge—10 am to 6 pm (MT).

May 14—Little Wound High School Gymnasium—Kyle—10 am to 6 pm (MT).

May 15—Pine Ridge Elementary School Gymnasium—Pine Ridge—10 am to 6 pm (MT).

All safety protocols will be followed including wearing masks, social distancing, and hand sanitizing.

For additional information or questions on the vaccination events, please contact the COVID Nurse Triage Line 605-867-3300 (M-F 8 am to 4:30 pm).

“We are pleased to be partnering with IHS and the Oglala Sioux Tribe to support these vaccination events and assist the Native American communities on Pine Ridge,” said Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, SDNG adjutant general. “During the past year, the South Dakota National Guard has provided a historic level of support to our state during the COVID-19 pandemic, and we look forward to this opportunity to continue to serve our communities.”

SCHAEFER TO SERVE AS EDMUNDS COUNTY VSO

Edmunds County has selected Barb Schaefer as their new county veterans service officer. Barb replaces Ron Hoffer who retired after serving as CVSO for 22 years for Edmunds County. Barb served with the SDNG 1742nd Transportation Company in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

Barb’s office will be located in the Edmunds County Court House and her office hours will be from 1:00—3:00 pm Monday through Friday. Her email address is edmundscovso@gmail.com.

Please join SDDVA in welcoming the newest County VSO to our network.



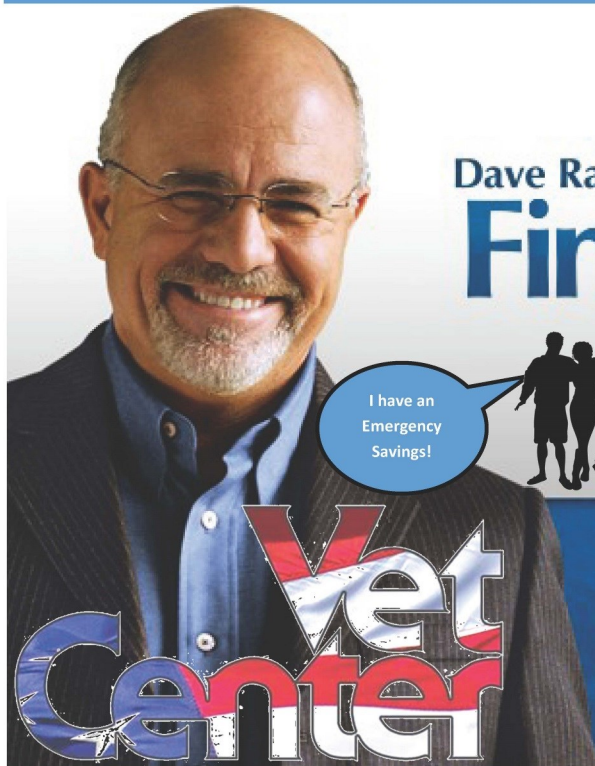
Get your finances in order! This class is FREE! Limited Seating.

Seeking Post-9/11 Veterans enrolled in VA Healthcare! Pre-Register by April 26th!

9 Wednesday's from 5pm—7pm April 28th—June 23th, 2021

Location: Rapid City Vet Center, 21 East Omaha St., Rapid City

Contact Anita at (605) 718-1095 x33076 or Duane at (605) 745-2000 x22175



Dave Ramsey's

Financial Peace
UNIVERSITY

I have an
Emergency
Savings!

Saved my
relationship!

"Now I have all the tools to
make it all the way! I highly
RECOMMEND this class to
everyone!"

**TOPICS INCLUDE: SUPER SAVING, DUMPING DEBT,
INSURANCE, INVESTMENTS, RETIREMENT, & MORE!**

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Black Hills Health Care System

Veterans
Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1



Caregiver Support Virtual Resource Fair

What: Caregiver Support Program is hosting a virtual resource fair as an opportunity for Veterans and Caregivers to learn of VA and community-based services and resources.

When: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 from 8:00 a.m.-noon MT

Who: All Veterans and Caregivers are invited to attend.

Where: The resource fair will be a virtual fair on Microsoft Teams and can be attended by computer, mobile device (by downloading MS Teams app), or by phone (audio only).

How:

- To join by phone (audio only), call 1-782-701-0185 and enter conference ID 268813945#.
- For assistance, contact Caregiver Support Program at (605) 347-2511 extension 17031.

Topics to be presented include:

- Caregiver Support Program
- Housing Grants and Home Modifications
- Home Health
- Home Telehealth
- Home-Based Primary Care
- Hospice and Palliative Care
- Advance Care Planning
- Mental Health
- Intimate Partner Violence
- Veteran Benefits
- and
- Community Caregiver Support Programs

VA/HUD JOINT STATEMENT ON ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

The United States [Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report \(AHAR\) to Congress](#) found that on a single night in January 2020, there were 37,252 veterans experiencing homelessness in America, an increase of 0.4% over 2019. This number does not account for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has added to the nation's housing challenges, including among veterans.

AHAR showed investments from Congress along with strong collaboration between the United States Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) brought about a 47% reduction in veteran homelessness between 2010 and 2016. However, a [GAO report](#) found that, since 2016, progress towards ending veteran homelessness has stalled. We find this pattern deeply concerning. No veteran who has served this country — let alone more than 37,000 on a given night — should experience homelessness.

We, the secretaries of VA and HUD, are aligning efforts and joining forces to work towards ending veteran homelessness. We are mobilizing the strength of our two departments to do everything in our power to ensure every veteran has access to safe and stable housing.

We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to tackle this crisis. The [American Rescue Plan](#) included more than \$10 billion in funding for individuals who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. The [American Jobs Plan](#) would invest \$213 billion to produce, preserve, and retrofit more than two million affordable homes.

Our collaboration is the first step of a multi-phased whole-of-government effort that will ultimately help us end veteran homelessness. We will evaluate existing strategies, implement new approaches when necessary, and execute a plan to ensure we achieve tangible results that incorporate best practices, feedback, and lessons learned from veterans, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders.

To fulfill this mission, we will:

- **Make ending veteran homelessness a top priority** – The VA and HUD will prioritize this effort at the highest levels. Staff in both agencies will collaboratively develop a strategy to significantly reduce the number of veterans experiencing homelessness, as well as a strategy to ensure that no veteran experiences homelessness in the future. The secretaries will participate in listening sessions with stakeholder groups, including veterans with lived expertise. Information and materials gathered will be analyzed for use during quarterly meetings with homeless program staff from both departments to inform decisions about changes to policies and programs. We will develop targets, assess progress, and hold our agencies accountable.
- **Lead with an evidence-based Housing First approach** – Evidence and past progress on reducing veteran homelessness demonstrate a Housing First approach works. Together, our agencies will ensure targeted interventions (such as [HUD-VA Supportive Housing](#), [Supportive Services for Veteran Families](#), and [Grant and Per Diem](#)) help veterans obtain stable housing as quickly as possible without barriers or preconditions.

(continued on next page)

ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS (CONTINUED)

- **Reach underserved veterans** – Reducing veteran homelessness will require new approaches to serving veterans for whom prior efforts may have fallen short. These include veterans with less than honorable discharge status, as well as veterans who are women, members of racial and ethnic minority groups, transgender and gender non-conforming, aging, and/or living in rural areas. We will ensure our inter-agency effort identifies and removes barriers to VA care and services, so benefits are equitably available among underserved veteran communities.
- **Ensure the delivery of quality supportive services** – Supportive services are critical to helping veterans find and retain housing, and to use it as a platform for achieving health, recovery, and economic success. Working diligently with federal and community stakeholders, we commit to identifying ways to ensure veterans have access to quality supportive health, mental health, and medical legal services alongside employment and housing assistance, whether provided by VA or community partners.
- **Increase the supply of and access to affordable housing** – A significant obstacle to ending veteran homelessness is the lack of affordable housing, especially in many urban centers. We will work jointly, including examining opportunities through the American Rescue Plan and the American Jobs Plan, to increase the supply of affordable housing and ensure veterans have access. Our agencies will do this by engaging landlords, and affordable housing developers, supporting the use of federal programs to create and subsidize affordable housing, identifying ways to improve veteran access to these housing units, and supporting state and local collaboration to finance and create affordable housing.

Working to end veteran homelessness requires a multi-agency effort, coordinated through the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. Together, we can enhance how we deliver services and provide opportunities to veterans to ensure we bring the full force of the federal government to end veteran homelessness.



The U.S. Department of
Housing and Urban Development
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**Veterans Health Administration
Office of Community Care

Reference Sheet

Veteran Copayment Cancellations and Refunds, March 2021

Throughout the last year, the financial well-being and the effects the COVID-19 pandemic is having on Veterans has been one of VA's top concerns. With passage of the American Rescue Plan, clear and lasting relief is available to Veterans.

Key facts on the cancellation of Veteran copayments incurred April 6, 2020 through September 30, 2021

- In April 2020, with passage of the CARES Act, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) stopped sending monthly patient statements for health care and pharmacy copayments out of concern for how COVID-19 was affecting Veterans and their financial well-being. Veterans continued to receive their health care, and while copayments were still being accrued, Veterans were not required to make payments; interest and fees also stopped, along with any collection actions.
- In November 2020, an "information only" letter was sent to nearly 2.5 million Veterans, informing them of their copayment balance, how account numbers could be obtained and that payment prior to the restarting of patient statements was voluntary.
- In January 2020, patient statements resumed, and contained both current and past (prior to April 6, 2020) copayment charges.
- In February 2021, VA halted patient statements due to an Executive Order signed by President Biden.
- In March 2021, with the passage of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) all Veteran copayments for medical care and pharmacy services provided April 6, 2020 through September 30, 2021 were canceled, along with any fees or interest. Statements will continue to be sent for information only, and collection on copayments for health care and pharmacy copayments will resume on October 1, 2021. Refunds for payments made for care received April 6, 2020 to present will be issued by VA.
- VA has an expansive debt relief program and Veterans with copayment balances for care incurred prior to April 6, 2020 are encouraged to explore their options.

Resources for Veterans:

- https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/revenue_ops/copays.asp
- https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/revenue_ops/billing.asp
- https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/revenue_ops/Financial_Hardship.asp

For more information on charges owed for health care and pharmacy services prior to April 6, 2020, debt relief options and/or account number information, Veterans can call the VHA Health Resource Center at 1-866-400-1238.

Fact Sheet

VA

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Office of Community Care

Veteran Copayment Cancellations and Refunds, March 2021

Q1. Why is my copayment balance being canceled?

A1. With the passage of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) in March 2021, all Veteran copayments for medical care and pharmacy services provided April 6, 2020 through September 30, 2021 will be canceled.

Q2. I've already paid on my balance over the last few months. Will I get a refund? When?

A2. Yes. You will receive a refund. Due to the passage of the ARP, Veterans who have paid copayments for medical care and pharmacy services provided April 6, 2020 to present will receive a refund from VA. Our staff is working on a timeline for issuing those refunds.

Q3. When will I start to receive statements again?

A3. As soon as VA cancels copayments for medical care and pharmacy services incurred from April 6, 2020 to present, VA will resume mailing patient statements for informational purposes only. Veterans are not required to make payments on these statements. Collection will remain suspended until October 1, 2021.

Q4. I had collection actions taken prior to when statements stopped in April 2020. Will those go away?

A4. All collection actions have been suspended from April 6, 2020 and will resume until October 1, 2021. You will be notified prior to collection actions resuming.

Q5. I had a balance on my account prior to April 6, 2020. What if I can't pay that balance due to financial matters?

A5. Payments are not due or expected until after October 1, 2021. Veterans who are experiencing financial hardship are encouraged to enroll in one of VA's debt relief programs. For more information, visit https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/revenue_ops/Financial_Hardship.asp

If you have a balance for care received prior to April 6, 2020, you may voluntarily make payments on your account by doing one of the following:

- Mail: include the payment coupon from the patient statement.
- www.pay.gov (patient account number is needed)
- Telephone: 888-827-4817 (patient account number is needed)
- To locate an account number, check your statement, visit <https://eauth.va.gov/accessva/?cspSelectFor=vbs> or call 866-400-1238

Q6. Can I still receive my same medical care from VA even though there won't be copayments?

A6. The quality and availability of VA health care will not change during this time. You can schedule appointments and communicate with your providers in the same manner you are accustomed to.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Apr 16—PURPLE UP for Military Kids

May 15—LCPL Conrad Flying Horse Bridge Dedication—McIntosh High School Football Field—10:00 am (MT)

June 13—Midwest Honor Flight Honor Ride—Begins at Military Heritage Alliance—Sioux Falls (1600 W. Russell Street)—Registration 12:30 pm (CT) and ride begins at 2:30 pm (CT)

June 24-27—American Legion State Convention—Huron

Aug 16-18—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Ramkota Hotel—Pierre

Aug 23—Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser at Barrel House—Sioux Falls (4701 E. 54th Street)

Oct 23—Midwest Honor Flight Hangar Dance at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance—Sioux Falls (1600 W. Russell Street)

Shopping List	
1.	
2.	Veterans at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State
3.	Veterans Home are in need of casual and
4.	lounge pants in men's medium and
5.	large sizes.
6.	
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15.	



HONOR RIDE

MIDWEST HONOR FLIGHT



"RIDING TO KEEP THEM FLYING"

Sunday, June 13, 2021 | 2:30 PM

Registration begins at 12:30 PM at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance. Honor a Veteran you know and ride to raise funds for Midwest Honor Flight. Ride includes a slow salute past the Sioux Falls VA Hospital before an escort to the new South Dakota State Cemetery.

MORE INFORMATION & PRE-REGISTRATION:
MIDWESTHONORFLIGHT.ORG/RIDE

Midwest Honor Flight is a 100% volunteer organization. All proceeds from this event go directly towards future Honor Flight and more importantly, our local Veterans.

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer

South Dakota Department of the Military <https://military.sd.gov/>

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov>

Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue

Pierre, SD 57501

Phone: 605-773-8242

E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us

